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SUBJECT: TURKEY: RESPONSE FOR GLOBAL CONTEXT SECTION OF THE QDDR

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¶1. (U) This cable responds to the information request in reftel. This cable is sensitive but unclassified, please protect accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) To what degree will/can technology empower individuals, or civil society in the host country, to exercise a more active role in public life? Are host country officials and citizens attuned to (or indifferent) to this issue? Is the host government supportive of or hostile to expansion of access to social networks or other similar tools? What non-state actors will be playing critical roles over the next two decades?

Turks, especially the younger generation, are enthusiastically embracing technology as a means to express themselves on everything, including international and national issues. Physical infrastructure is not an impediment to Turks' access to the internet, cell phones or satellite television. The Turkish government last year denied its citizenry access to YouTube when officials found film clips they deemed insulting to the founder of modern Turkey, Kemal Ataturk. Turks are able to circumvent the restriction with little difficulty. Ministries have been uneven in their willingness to use technology to encourage participatory government. The major government initiative of the latter half of 2009, "the Democratic (Kurdish) Opening," has been presented to the population primarily through government statements, ministers' televised speeches and public appearances by the minister of interior throughout the country. Turkey's EU Secretariat, however, is encouraging a nation-wide exchange of perspectives on Turkey's EU candidacy by inviting Turks to join its recently established chatroom.

¶3. (SBU) What attitude do critical publics in the host country display toward the so-called rising powers - India, China, and Brazil, for example - and how do they perceive other important international players, including key international organizations?

Critical publics generally admire the rise to prominence of India, China and Brazil. Positive attitudes towards China are tempered by Beijing's perceived repression of the Turkic-speaking Uighurs, with whom many Turks feel an ethnic kinship. Turks view India with tremendous respect, but have difficulty identifying an India model they can emulate. Physical distance from Brazil probably attenuates Turkish interest in that country. Turks' attention to international organizations tends to focus on NATO, to which they look for their ultimate security guarantee, and the EU, which they seek to join as a validation of their European-ness. It should also be kept in mind that Turkey considers itself, with some justification, to be a rising power along the lines of the countries mentioned above.

¶4. (SBU) What does the host country identify as the most important issues (both internal and external) critical to its own development and to international development writ large?

As Turkey integrates ever more fully into the global marketplace with an export-led development model, it views continued access to existing markets and diversification into new markets (such as the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America) as essential to growth and development. Integration of the less-developed eastern and southeastern regions of the country into the national economy is a priority for the government, and involves not only economic and infrastructure development but also cultural and political inclusion of minority populations. Access to reliable sources of energy both for rapidly growing internal consumption and for transit will be a key determinant of future growth and is a focus of government attention. Continued progress toward joining the EU will help spur new reforms, cement existing institutions, and potentially bring in new sources of development funds. Access to capital markets and the necessary financing to cover current account deficits will be vital to avoid disruptions to upward economic development.

¶5. (SBU) What is the host country position on climate change issues, or on any resource conflict questions? What steps is the host country government taking to deal with potential future demographic challenges?

Turkey has shown a commitment to contributing to the global effort on climate change by ratifying the Kyoto Protocol and making renewable energy one of the main pillars of its energy strategy. Turkey has set a goal of generating 30 percent of

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its power from renewable sources by 2023. To help the country toward achieving that goal, the government is now amending the Renewable Energy Law to include stronger incentives for investment in power generation from renewables. Efforts in this and other areas related to addressing climate change, however, are limited by Turkey's financial constraints. The GoT has been clear that despite its inclusion among the Annex 1 industrialized countries of the Kyoto Protocol, its economy is less developed than other Annex 1 countries and it cannot afford the same level of commitments.

¶6. (SBU) To what extent does "backslicing" pose a threat to local democratic movement (or to what degree does the country perceive this as a threat elsewhere)?

The unparalleled success of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has made Turkey subject, in recent years, to the democratic weaknesses of a one-party system. The ruling party's tendency to abuse the tools of governmental power in pursuit of political and media enemies is infringing upon the professionalism of the civil service, the neutrality of the judiciary and the independence of the press. The rampant use of wiretaps of dubious legality is chilling political discussions among individuals who take issue with government policies.

JEFFREY

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